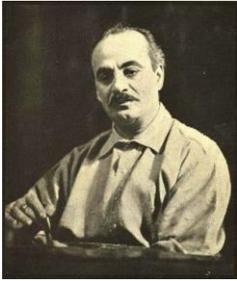


Walking the Path with Jesus and Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931): Lent and Early Easter

SESSION TWO: Mon Eve. March 19 (6:30-8 p.m.) repeated Tues. Morn. March 20 (9:30-11 a.m.)



Gibran Readings, Session One

[Pictured: Gibran's Self-Portrait]

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1. Reading: Overview of the 3 Gibran Sessions February 26-27, March 19-20, & April 16-17

The Last Session. We read and discussed Gibran's achievement, early Life, religion (including Christianity and the Baha'i faith), and politics. We focused primarily on his most famous work (*The Prophet*, 1923) and his earliest work (*The Madman*, 1918). We also discuss the voices that appear in Gibran's *Jesus, Son of Man* (1928) and read the selection from Jesus' grandmother. If you email me at menkepamela@yahoo.com, I'll be glad to email the packet to you.

This 2nd Session (March 19-20). We will consider the rest of Gibran's life followed by another discussion of *The Prophet*. We will then take a brief look at the short aphorisms (clever, wise sayings) in *Sand and Foam* (1926). That work serves as a link between *The Prophet*, published 3 years earlier, and *Jesus, Son of Man*, published 2 years later. We'll consider the life and work of 13th C. Persian, Sufi poet Rumi, a central influence on Gibran and will begin our discussion of the narratives from *Jesus, Son of Man*.

3rd Session (April 16-17). We will explore the last years of Gibran's life, his burial, and his legacy and will conclude our discussion of *Jesus, Son of Man*. We will consider Gibran's patriotic writing and selections from his other works, including *Broken Wings* (translated from Arabic). We will also enjoy and learn from Gibran's exquisite art work.

Gibran, Complete Texts. Project Gutenberg Australia has Gibran's major works online. The documents re easy to read, searchable, and are in the public domain. Here are the 2 major works:

Son of Man = <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebookso3/0301451h.html>

The Prophet = <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200061h.html>

2. Reading: Gibran Biography (1904-1931)

[The packet for the 1st Gibran session (January 2018) included information on Gibran's earlier years. You'll also find an excellent biography on the Poetry Foundation website. Here's the link: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/kahlil-gibran.>]



Gibran meets Mary Haskell (1904). In April 1904 Day held a favorably reviewed exhibit of Gibran's work at his studio. At the show Gibran met Mary Haskell. She became his most important patron: Haskell, the headmistress of a private Boston girls' school, was from a wealthy South Carolina family.

Unlike Elizabeth Peabody and the other women who drifted in and out of Gibran's life, Haskell was a hardheaded businesswoman. Apparently she decided--correctly, it turned out--that Gibran was the most important person she would ever meet and that it was her responsibility to encourage him and to document his intellectual and artistic life. She recorded their conversations and preserved his sketches and other items in extremely detailed journals.

She supported Gibran intellectually, financially, and emotionally, with, it seems, a clear understanding of the financial and emotional costs involved. They considered marriage, but their relationship never became sexual.

Day's Studio Destroyed. Gibran becomes a Newspaper Columnist and pursues love (s). Day's studio burned in the winter of 1904, destroying Gibran's entire artistic portfolio. Around that time the editor of the New York Arabic newspaper *al-Mohajer (The Emigrant)*, hired Gibran to write a weekly column; he paid Gibran \$2.00 for each piece. Gibran's columns became increasingly popular since his vivid images and allegories addressed exile, oppression, and loneliness and spoke to the experiences of Syrian immigrants. Other Gibran publications in Arabic followed, including several short-story collections.

During this same period, Gibran began a secret affair with pianist Gertrude Barrie (older than Gibran). But when Haskell introduced him to aspiring French actress Emilie Michel, who taught French at Haskell's school, she and Gibran fell in love. Sadly in 1908 Michel suffered an ectopic pregnancy and had to have an abortion. The relationship waned and ultimately ended, a victim of Michel's ambitions for a stage career.

Gibran, in Paris (1908-1910), discovers the art and poetry of William Blake, has artistic success. In 1908 Haskell paid for Gibran travel to Paris to study art. There he improved his skill with pastels and oils and discovered the mystical creations of British poet William Blake. Blake illustrated his own works, including *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789); Gibran would soon do the same.

Gibran began enjoying artistic success. He was invited to contribute paintings to prestigious shows and sketched portraits of French sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) and other famous artists. He also discovered the works of Syrian political exiles and the writings of German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Eventually Gibran's money ran out, and he returned to the United States in October 1910.

Gibran and Selma in Gibran's first novel *The Broken* (1912--(in Arabic)). Gibran published an autobiographical novel he had written several years earlier. Entitled *al-Ajniha al-mutakassira, (The Broken Wings)*, the novel is about 18-year-old Gibran's Beirut encounter with Selma, the young daughter of a wealthy and kind father. Selma becomes Gibran's idealized beloved who generates in her suitor (Gibran) both ecstatic views of love and profound despair. Selma's Arabic name means "peaceful, protected by the gods." Her loving compassion and religious fervor reflects that the appropriateness of her name.

But her love for Gibran and her life ended tragically. Not long before Selma met Gibran, her father had reluctantly given in to strong pressure from his bishop and agreed to an arranged marriage between his daughter and the bishop's wastrel nephew. Then Selma met Gibran. Although they had little time together, they loved each other fiercely and spiritually. Heartbroken, the father fulfilled his promise to the bishop, and Selma married the bishop's nephew. After five childless 5, Selma gave birth to a son; both died immediately after the birth.

Returns to Boston and Moves to Greenwich Village. After Paris, Gibran found Boston stifling, and, with Haskell's help, moved to Greenwich Village in 1911. His circle of admirers included Swiss psychiatrist and psychologist Carl Jung and several Baha'is; the latter introduced him to the visiting Baha'i leader 'Abd al-Baha', whose portrait he drew. New York was also the center of the Arabic literary scene in America, and Gibran met many literary and artistic figures who lived in or passed through the city, including Irish poet and dramatist William Butler Yeats.

Gibran grew more politically active, supporting the idea of revolution to gain Syrian independence from the Ottoman Empire. Though Gibran initially had some success as an artist in New York, artistic currents were moving rapidly in other directions. He devoted most of his time to painting for the next eighteen years but remained loyal to the romantic symbolism of his youth and became an isolated figure on the New York art scene. On the other hand, Gibran's literary career blossomed. *Al-Funun (The Arts)*, an Arabic newspaper founded in New York in 1913, provided a new vehicle for his writings, some of which were openly political. The editor of *al-Funun* published a collection of fifty-six of Gibran's early newspaper columns as *Dam'a wa ibtisamah* (1914; translated as *A Tear and a Smile*, 1950).

Gibran feigned reluctance to republish these pieces on the grounds that he had moved beyond them. They are not especially deep, but they have a freshness and the moral earnestness that was always Gibran's strength in his writing and his art. The collection was dedicated to Haskell using her initials, "M.E.H." Along with Robert Frost, he became an advisory board member of a prominent literary magazine.

Gibran established as an important writer. He became popular on the poetry-reading circuit. Gibran's first book in English, *The Madman: His Parables and Poems*, was completed in 1917 and published in 1918 by a new publisher Alfred A. Knopf, who went on to publish all of Gibran's English works.

Haskell moves to Savannah. In 1923 the financially and emotionally exhausted Haskell moved to Savannah, Georgia, and became the companion of an elderly widower, Colonel Jacob Florence Minis. But her faith in Gibran's literary and artistic importance never wavered. She continued to edit his English manuscripts—discreetly, since Minis did not approve of Gibran.

[We'll discuss Gibran's death in Session 3.]

Reading 3. 2 (Iranian) Mystics: Rumi (1207-1273) & Hafez (1310-1390)



3A. RUMI (1207-1273), the Western name used for Jalal ad-Din Muhammad, was a 13th C. Persian poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic. He was also a devout Muslim and a lifelong scholar of the Koran and Islam. He continues to be revered as one of the most passionate and profound poets in history. His master work contains over 60,000 poems. It is said that he was able to "describe the Indescribable, Ineffable: God."

Regarded as one of the greatest spiritual masters and poetical intellects, he belonged to a family of learned theologians. He made use of everyday life's circumstances to describe the spiritual world. Rumi's poems have acquired immense popularity, especially among the Persian speakers of Afghanistan, Iran and Tajikistan.

In 1244, Rumi met a wandering dervish, the holy man Shams al-Din (Sun of Religion). During Shams' revelation to Rumi of the mysteries of divine majesty and beauty, Rumi experienced a mystical transformation. Forgetting his responsibilities to his family and disciples, Rumi and Shams became inseparable. Rumi's followers (and, possibly his brothers) finally forced Shams to leave the village. Rumi's son found Shams, who returned to the village, but in 1247 disappeared forever (apparently murdered).

Rumi was inspired to write poetry express his loss and longing for the beloved. As Rumi's son wrote, "he found Shams in himself, radiant like the moon." In the process, Rumi fully embraced the power and mystery of God's love and the connection between the lover and the beloved as the merging of the soul with the ultimate God-source.

In his later life, Rumi was sought out by his country's leading officials as well as Christian monks. His burial procession, according to one of Rumi's contemporaries, was attended by a vast crowd of people of many faiths and nationalities.

Source of Rumi Biography: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Rumi>

RUMI SELECTIONS

Light Breeze

As regards feeling pain, like a hand cut in battle, consider the body a robe you wear.

When you meet someone you love, do you kiss their clothes? Search out who's inside.
Union with God is sweeter than body comforts.

We have hands and feet different from these. Sometimes in a dream we see them.

That is not illusion. It's seeing truly.

You do have a spirit body; don't dread leaving the physical one.

Sometimes someone feels this truth so strongly that he or she can live in mountain solitude totally refreshed.

The worried, heroic doings of men and women seem weary and futile to dervishes enjoying the light breeze of spirit.

Meditations on Breath by Rumi

The Reed

A craftsman pulled a reed from the reed bed, cut holes in it, and called it a human being. Since then, it's been wailing a tender agony of parting, never mentioning the skill that gave it life as a flute.

We are as the flute

We are as the flute, and the music in us is from thee;
we are as the mountain and the echo in us is from thee.

We are as pieces of chess engaged in victory and defeat:
our victory and defeat is from thee, O thou whose qualities are comely!

Who are we, O Thou soul of our souls that we should remain in being beside thee?

We and our existences are really non-existence; thou art the absolute Being which manifests the perishable....

Our wind whereby we are moved and our being are of thy gift; our whole existence is from thy bringing us into being.

Be your note

Remember the lips where wind-breath originated, and let your note be clear.

Don't try to end it.

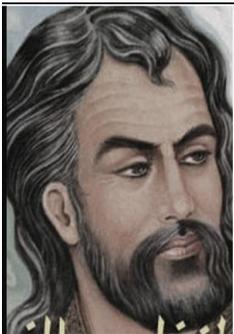
Be your note.

I'll show you how it's enough.

Go up on the roof at night in this city of the soul.

Let everyone climb on their roofs and sing their notes.

Sing loud!



3B. HAFEZ (c. 1310-1390) is the penname of Persian poet Khwāja Shams-ud-Din-Muhammad Ḥāfez-e Shīrāzī. His penname means “guardian or memorizer” and is the designation Muslims use for someone who has completely memorized the Quran, as apparently did a very young Hafez. In his native land of Persia (modern Iran), Hafez’s *Divan* (Iranian title for his collected poems) are rivaled only by the Quran. Hafez’s lyrical words are said to be more like songs than poetry. Famous in his lifetime, his poetry continues to be well known today. Most Iranian families have his *Divan* in their homes. When they gather on high holy days, they open the *Divan* to a random page and read the poem as a foretelling of their future. On October 19, *Iranians commemorate the national day of Hafez.*

Hafez Influence. Gibran is not alone in learning from the spiritual insights and poetry of Hafez. Since 1771 when the first English translation of Hafez’s work became available, numerous writers have been drawn to Hafez’s spiritual insights, including 20th C. American poet Mary Oliver, Englishman Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (author of the Sherlock Holmes detective series), 19th C. American Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, and 18th C. German author Goethe.

Oliver has used Hafez lines in her poetry. Emerson insists that that Hafez is a visionary and “is the only man I wish to see or be.” Proclaiming that “Hafez has no peer,” Goethe praises the “undeniable truth” of Hafez’s poetry. And you’ll find Hafez quotations that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle sprinkles through the Holmes’ mysteries.

Biography. The death of Hafez father, a merchant, left his family in debt. Hafez had to leave school and work in a bakery. Delivering bread to a wealthy part of town, Hafez supposedly saw a woman of great beauty.

Overwhelmed, but knowing that his love for her would not be requited, he allegedly held his first mystic vigil to assuage his desire for union with her.

However, during the long vigil, he encountered a beautiful being who identified himself as an angel. Thus inspired, Hafez's further attempts at union became a mystical pursuit of spiritual union with the divine although he often described that pursuit in language that could be viewed as passionate, if not erotic. Hafez may or may not have been aware of the Italian poet Dante (1265-1327) and his glorious masterpiece, *The Divine Comedy* (1320). In it, Dante's unfulfilled love for Beatrice becomes transformed into a successful quest for God and the perfection of divine love.

One of the guiding principles of Hafez's life was Sufism, the Islamic mystical movement that demanded its adherents become completely devoted to the pursuit of union with the ultimate reality. Among the Hafez legend is his undertaking a 40-day-and-night Vigil at age 60. For that entire time, he sat in a circle he had drawn for himself. On the 40th day, he envisioned the patron with whom he had studied. The patron offered Hafez a cup of wine. At that moment, it is said that Hafez attained "Cosmic Consciousness."

Hafez's poetry expresses the intoxicating oneness of human union with Divine Love. Along with other Sufi masters, Hafez connects the ideas/images of wine and intoxication of secular love and/or pleasure with the even more intoxicating immersion into and sharing of the Divine Love of God.

Source Hafez Biography: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hafez>

HAFEZ SELECTIONS

All the Hemispheres

Leave the familiar for a while. Let your senses and bodies stretch out like a welcomed season onto the meadows and shores and hills.

Open up to the Roof. Make a new water-mark on your excitement and love.
Like a blooming night flower,
Bestow your vital fragrance of happiness and giving upon our intimate assembly.

Change the rooms in your mind for a day.
All the hemispheres in existence lie beside an equator in your heart.

Greet yourself in your thousand other forms
as you mount the hidden tide and travel back home.

All the hemispheres in heaven are sitting around a fire chatting while stitching themselves together into the Great Circle inside You.

Tonight is Love

We are the guardians of His Beauty. We are the protectors of the Sun.
There is only one reason we have followed God into this world: to encourage laughter, freedom, dance and love. Let a noble cry inside of you speak to me saying,

"Hafez, Don't just sit there on the moon tonight doing nothing. Help unfurl my heart into the Friend's Mind, Help, Old Man, to heal my wounded wings!"

We are the companions of His Beauty. We are the guardians of Truth.
Every man, plant and creature in Existence,
Every woman, child, vein and note is a servant of our Beloved:
A harbinger of joy. The harbinger of Light.

4. Gibran, Selection from *The Madman* (1918), "God"

GOD

In the ancient days, when the first quiver of speech came to my lips, I ascended the holy mountain and spoke unto God, saying, "Master, I am thy slave. Thy hidden will is my law and I shall obey thee for ever more." But God made no answer, and like a mighty tempest passed away.

And after a thousand years I ascended the holy mountain and again spoke unto God, saying, "Creator, I am thy creation. Out of clay hast thou fashioned me and to thee I owe mine all." And God made no answer, but like a thousand swift wings passed away.

And after a thousand years I climbed the holy mountain and spoke unto God again, saying, "Father, I am thy son. In pity and love thou hast given me birth, and through love and worship I shall inherit thy kingdom." And God made no answer, and like the mist that veils the distant hills he passed away.

And after a thousand years I climbed the sacred mountain and again spoke unto God, saying, "My God, my aim and my fulfilment; I am thy yesterday and thou art my tomorrow. I am thy root in the earth and thou art my flower in the sky, and together we grow before the face of the sun."

Then God leaned over me, and in my ears whispered words of sweetness, and even as the sea that enfoldeth a brook that runneth down to her, he enfolded me. And when I descended to the valleys and the plains God was there also.

5. Additional selections from *The Prophet* (1923)

(1) #7. JOY AND SORROW. THEN a woman said, Speak to us of Joy and Sorrow. And he answered: Your joy is your sorrow unmasked. And the selfsame well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears. And how else can it be? The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain. Is not the cup that holds your wine the very cup that was burned in the potter's oven? And is not the lute that soothes your spirit the very wood that was hollowed with knives? When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy. When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.

(2) #22. PRAYER. THEN a priestess said, "Speak to us of Prayer." And he answered, saying: You pray in your distress and in your need; would that you might pray also in the fullness of your joy and in your days of abundance. For what is prayer but the expansion of yourself into the living ether?

And if it is for your comfort to pour your darkness into space, it is also for your delight to pour forth the dawning of your heart....Therefore let your visit to that temple invisible be only for ecstasy and sweet communion. For if you should enter the temple for no other purpose than asking, you shall not receive. And if you should enter into it to humble yourself, you shall not be lifted. Even if you enter into it to beg for the good of others, you shall not be heard. It is enough that you enter the temple invisible.

I cannot teach you how to pray in words. God listens not to your words save when He Himself utters them through your lips. And I cannot teach you the prayer of the seas and the forests and the mountains. But you who are born of the mountains and the forests and the seas can find their prayer in your heart. If you listen in the stillness of the night you shall hear them saying in silence: "Our God, who art our winged self, it is thy will in us that willeth....Thou art our need; in giving us more of thyself thou givest us all."

(3) #26. DEATH. THEN Almitra spoke, saying, "We would ask now of Death." And he said: You would know the secret of death. But how shall you find it unless you seek it in the heart of life? The owl whose night-bound eyes are blind unto the day cannot unveil the mystery of light.

If you would indeed behold the spirit of death, open your heart wide unto the body of life. For life and death are one even as the river and the sea are one. In the depth of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond. Like seeds dreaming beneath the snow, your heart dreams of spring. Trust the dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity....Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing. And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb. And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.

(3) CLOSING: THE FAREWELL. And now it was evening. And Almitra the seer said, “Blessed be this day and this place and your spirit that has spoken.” And he answered, “Was it I who spoke? Was I not also a listener?”

Then he descended the steps of the Temple and all the people followed him. And he reached his ship and stood upon the deck. And facing the people again, he raised his voice and said: “People of Orphalese, the wind bids me leave you. I go with the wind, people of Orphalese, but not down into emptiness.

...Know, therefore, that from the greater silence I shall return...my spirit has entered your houses, And your heart-beats were in my heart, and your breath was upon my face, and I knew you all...It was the boundless in you: He whose chant in all your singing is a soundless throbbing. It is in the vast Man that you are vast. And in beholding him, I beheld you and loved you.

Vague and nebulous is the beginning of all things, but not their end...I...would have you remember me as a beginning...But you do not see, nor do you hear, and it is well. The veil that clouds your eyes shall be lifted by the hands that wove it, and the clay that fills your ears shall be pierced by those fingers that kneaded it. And you shall see.

And you shall hear. You shall not deplore having known blindness, nor regret having been deaf. For in that day you shall know the hidden purposes in all things, and you shall bless darkness as you would bless light. After saying these things he looked about him, and he saw the pilot of his ship standing by the helm and gazing now at the full sails.

Fare you well, people of Orphalese. This day has ended...Forget not that I shall come back to you. A little while, and my longing shall gather dust and foam for another body. A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman shall bear me. Farewell to you and the youth I have spent with you.

It was but yesterday we met in a dream. You have sung to me in my aloneness, and I of your longings have built a tower in the sky. But now our sleep has fled and our dream is over, and it is no longer dawn. The noontide is upon us and our half waking has turned to fuller day, and we must part. If in the twilight of memory we should meet once more, we shall speak again together and you shall sing to me a deeper song. And if our hands should meet in another dream we shall build another tower in the sky.

So saying he made a signal to the seamen, and straightaway they weighed anchor and cast the ship loose ...And a cry came from the people as from a single heart, and it rose into the dusk and was carried out over the sea like a great trumpeting.

Only Almitra was silent, gazing after the ship until it had vanished into the mist. And when all the people were dispersed she still stood alone upon the sea-wall, remembering in her heart his saying: “A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman shall bear me.”